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Governor Baker: “Expanding Provider Use for Treatment”

Bill Boosts Opioid Education, Tightens Prescribing, and Adds Pathway to Treatment

BOSTON – Continuing the series of initiatives to combat the opioid epidemic, Governor Baker today unveiled [legislation](#) to provide medical personnel with the power to intervene with patients suffering from addiction, control the spread of addictive prescription opioids and increase education about substance use disorder (SUD) for providers and in the community. The bill, titled “An Act Relative to Substance Use Treatment, Education and Prevention,” contains several additional provisions developed by the Governor’s Opioid Working Group to address prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery.

Governor Baker
Press Briefing Room, Massachusetts State House
October 15, 2015



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[Click here to read "An Act Relative to Substance Use Treatment, Education, and Prevention"](#)

Transcription:

GOVERNOR BAKER: This legislation brings many important reforms to the fore, ranging from a new curriculum to educate student athletes on opioid use to amending the civil commitment statute to improve patient treatment options. First of all, our legislation will limit the prescribing practices for first-time opioid prescriptions to allow only a 72-hour supply of medication, with few exceptions. This means the first time a doctor prescribes an opioid prescription, or when you visit a new doctor, he or she will only supply you with a limited quantity. This bill will grant medical professionals the authority to involuntarily hold patients for 72 hours if they pose a danger to themselves or others. Right now, someone suffering from substance use disorders can only be held for treatment through a court order, and those orders must be granted while the court is in session and it prevents people from seeking help on nights, weekends, and holidays when the court is not in session. This limits access for families and patients in need of a 24-hour front door to treatment for substance abuse emergencies and we want to change that to get more help to people faster. I've talked to many people in the Commonwealth – moms, dads, brothers, sisters, friends, neighbors – who've spent many sleepless nights trying to help a family member or a friend deal with addiction. That 72 hours period is an opportunity to help folks find their way to a better path. And I get the fact that this is also a reasonably controversial notion, but it's a conversation worth having, and having spent a lot of time talking to a lot of people who have been personally affected by this, I think it's the right thing to do.

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